

ODIHR 2018 Plenary Intervention 6th Session
Tolerance Non Discrimination September 13

Speech at ODIHR 2018, September 13th regarding

Antimuslim Racism / Islamophobia in Switzerland

As announced last year we are here today to present the results of the first poll amongst the Muslim population in Switzerland regarding their anti-muslim racism, hate crime and islamophobic experiences.

UETD Switzerland initiated with the cooperation of interested NGO's a research about the Muslim Community in Switzerland which resulted in a poll conducted by the Swiss polling institute gfs.bern ag.

<https://www.gfsbern.ch/de-ch/Detail/hinweise-auf-erlebte-aber-kaum-registrierte-hasskriminalitaet>

7 Muslim NGO's are carriers of this pilot study:

- Coordination Islamic Organizations of Switzerland KIOS
- Vereinigung Islamischer Organisationen Zürich VIOZ
- Basler Muslim Kommission BMK
- Türkische Gemeinschaft Schweiz TGS
- Föderation Islamischer Vereine Schweiz
- Türkisch-Islamische Stiftung Schweiz TIS
- Müsiad Schweiz, Verein unabhängiger Industrieller und Unternehmen

Last year we could only announce this research. This year we can deliver results.

Hate Crime

35% of the Muslims testify that they experienced hate crime in Switzerland. 53% say that they know other Muslims having

experienced hate crime. 73% are sure that this experience is because of the religion. 16% are not sure and say their religion is the probable cause. 5% say the religion was not relevant in their hate crime experience. 6% do not answer.

Discrimination

The sources of discrimination are identified with 54% single person discriminating and 34% government institutions while 12% do not answer this question. 39% experience discrimination in public places, 36% at workplace, 21% at school or university. 85% say the reason for discrimination was their religion, 43% their nationality, 39% their race, and 15% their language.

Trust in the Government

To the question whether they believe in the government or not, 42% do not answer at all. 33% say the government is against the people and 25% say they trust in the government. As opposed to the federal and cantonal government the number of Muslims trusting the local municipalities is 60%. The same level of trust enjoy the courts and the police.

Media and Muslims

88% believe that the reason why non-muslims have negative feelings against the muslims in Switzerland is because of the role of the media. 4% say the role of the media has no such effect, 8% do not answer this question.

72% say that media coverage about Muslims around the globe has a negative effect on their daily life in Switzerland. 20% say that the current media coverage does not affect their lives in Switzerland. 8% do not answer this question.

A research institute of the University of Zurich also analyzed independently how the media reported about Muslims in Switzerland and came to comparable results. This report was

published by the Federal Commission against Racism 10 days ago and announced on the web page of the Federal Government of Switzerland. We also got aware of other research projects named “Political Instrumentalization of Islam?” from 2018-2021. As the Muslim minority we hope that the academia will present results to tackle antimuslim racism and discrimination in Switzerland.

We have contacted/informed the Ethics Commission of the Swiss Association of Communication and Media Research about these alarming results and asked them whether they are aware of this phenomenon. We offered a dialogue to discuss this problem and we will keep you informed about any results.

Leaving Switzerland

To the question whether Muslims think of leaving Switzerland 29% answer that they had thought of this. 7% say they have concrete plans to leave. 15% say they would live in Switzerland but would arrange their body to be buried somewhere else. 34% say they would not leave Switzerland. 15% do not answer this question.

How was this poll received by the civil society? By state institutions? By Human Rights organisations?

This poll was published in January 2018. Until today none of the 7 muslim carriers have been contacted to be informed about the results of this poll. Muslim NGO’s have contacted the Federal Commission to fight against racism. Although we contacted the Commission 10 months ago to share the results with and to start a dialogue we are still waiting for a response.

Recently, we also contacted labor unions, the Conference of the cantonal Educational Ministers, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch Switzerland.

Since about 2/3 of the participating Muslims say they believe in the courts, the police and the municipalities we believe this trust is something to build on to counter antimuslim racism in Switzerland. In this regard we are looking forward to commence our dialogue also with

- The Conference of the Cantonal Ministers of Justice and Police
 - Swiss Union of Municipalities
 - Swiss Union of Cities
- which already contacted.

We intend to keep you informed whether the stakeholders react, respond to our invitations or start working on these data offered by the Muslim NGO's of Switzerland who contributed to this study.

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